/643 cont./

867 whom you really like. At first every chap will be so agreeable; later when he has married you, it turns out that he is crude or lazy or unbearable. Then you will have to suffer. So, consider before you decide!" Nelly added: "One must warn young girls and make them alert, otherwise they will thoughtlessly and prematurely say 'yes' to the first chap who comes along. Later when the young couple find they are unsuited to eath other, the elders among their relatives will suffer for it just as much as they themselves!" Likewise /644/ the young man is given a definite hint by his uncle to take as his bride only the girl with whom "he will live peaceably for the rest of his life."

584 That there is freedom in the first choice can also be deduced
586 from the right every woman has to run away from the husband who treats her badly or does not provide enough food for her. How could she be taken in again by her parents, which is generally done, if she had previously been actually sold? Her male relatives warn the husband and threaten to take back the mistreated wife. They would not dare do this if he had bought her for a price.

584 It very seldom happens that two young people become
578 united if there is a strained relationship or open hostility between their parents. If such a match should be developing, the parents of the boy and those of the girl make insulting, even threatening remarks against the other party within their own family hut in order to thwart their children's intentions. It may be that a preliminary inclination toward a marital union will sooner or later disappear under this influence. Out of respect for her own parents the girl will forego her heart's desire, and since she makes no fuss about this, her closest relatives will not interfere on her behalf.

584 Still more awkward is the exceptional case of a girl who is
736 an orphan and very much dependent on her uncle and aunt. The
604 latter, driven by stubbornness or ambition, insistently urge her to choose the chap they recommend. If the solitary girl is unable to resist adequately, she will finally accede to their urging. My informers emphasized that such a case was rare, and that the previous history of the case would become publicly known only if this forced marriage, so to speak, should, in an exceptional instance, be dissolved.

/646 cont./
587 to social life. Naturally, adult nephews and nieces who are
604 married are not under the guardianship of their uncle. If the de-
736 ceased has several brothers, these obligations fall upon the old-
est, but not infrequently a younger brother comes forward, espe-
cially if he has his eye on his widowed sister-in-law. At any
rate, the brothers come to an agreement, and usually the one
who wants to take advantage of the opportunity promptly and
boldly takes charge without interference by the others.

The eldest brother, as such, has a priority to his widowed sister-in-law. It is well known that brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law are not prevented from marrying. The duty of an unmarried brother-in-law to take the widow almost borders on coercion. Differences in age have nothing to do with it. The widow has a perfectly free choice, but she can hardly resist the pressure put upon her by her brother-in-law if some outsider does not court her. If the widow actually exercises her right and marries another man instead of her brother-in-law, the latter is not relieved of his care for the children. He has to take the nephews and nieces if the new stepfather does not care to rear them. He is then content to know that his sister-in-law is taken care of economically. His nephews and nieces, however, will always have strong support from their paternal uncle, since his obligation toward them never ceases.

587 /647/ A married brother-in-law adequately fulfills his duty toward his widowed sister-in-law if he helps her toward economic security. Marrying her depends partly on the consent of his own wife. If the widow wishes to marry another man or to remain unmarried with one of her children or with relatives of her deceased husband, he does not prevent her from doing so. Sometimes the
587 brother-in-law takes advantage of the favorable opportunity to
• 586 enter into a new marriage if he is not satisfied with his first wife. Whether or not the latter agrees, he brings the widowed sister-in-law into his hut, and the only thing usually achieved by it is that the other withdraws, which is what he intended. It is even regarded as legal that a married man leave his first wife and, in her stead, take his widowed sister-in-law into his hut. If their married life was not very happy, she, too, is usually very glad of the solution, and her relatives take her in with open arms. This duty of marrying a widow is practiced even in modern times.

/666 cont./

595 in place of the one who ran away, was dismissed, or died. Such
587 a man cannot be called a polygamist in the strict sense of the word. Besides, a Yamana really has enough with two wives!" The explanation deserves to be carefully noted.

595 A Fuegian should not have more than one wife from free
586 choice, as can be seen from the fact that the feeling of the general public demands a definite and fundamental reason for taking a second spouse. If incompatability or serious alienation develops between married people, they ultimately separate. If after that some man takes a second woman as his wife, he does so for purely external reasons.

595 Almost always it is a question of incapacity to work on her part or a physical ailment of long duration. Modern times have brought about the latter condition. In view of the prevailing division of labor among the married Yamana, the man is absolutely dependent upon the unimpaired energy of his marital partner. If she must stop working for even a short time, she herself provides a substitute for him by summoning her sister, aunt, or niece. This state of affairs could not go on permanently. For example, if a wife has broken an arm or /667/ leg, she needs extra help, besides being unable to perform her customary work. As soon as she is aware of her hopeless condition, she voluntarily advises her husband to marry another woman. The man now has a true right to a second wife (53). Her still unmarried sister may

53. Dabbene (b):189 also grants it to him: "The man has a right to take another wife if the one he has is already old or if some misfortune leaves her with a serious physical defect" /translated from Spanish/. Spegazzini (a): 166 expressed himself in the same vein.

have taken over her duties, adjusted well to the brother-in-law, and be on the best of terms with his children. What could be more natural than that this brother-in-law say to her: "Stay with me as my second wife!". She probably always accepts the offer, if only out of pity for her sick sister and for the latter's children. Sometimes if an elderly couple are anxious for a fresh worker, he

/667 cont./

595 will take a healthy girl. This decision is very welcome to many a contentious old woman, because she now has a young creature completely under her domination. Thus she compensates for the fact that he shows more fondness toward the other than toward her. In both instances, the reason for polygamy is evident (54).

> 54. Different interpretations and descriptions should be corrected on the basis of these principles. According to Bove (e):157, "the necessity for having paddlers for the canoe, as well as a great predilection for the female sex, is the reason for such widespread polygamy. This is doubtless the most effective cause for the impoverishment of that race." The remark by Bridges (e):332 that "bigamy was very prevalent because of the great advantages connected with it" means nothing.

595 837 586 At various times Fred Lawrence repeated to me: "A Yamana never keeps a second woman as his wife, in addition to his first wife, for purely sensual reasons. If his lust is so great, he seeks relief in forbidden ways. If he has become absolutely infatuated with another woman who responds to his intentions, he gets rid of his first wife without further ado in order to be able to live with her alone, undisturbed."

595 In February, 1920, reliable Alfredo explained to me emphatically in the presence of his own wife and old Julia, neither of whom contradicted him: "If a Yamana wants to take another person into his hut as a second wife, he does not need to ask his wife about it. But he almost always does so, for he loves his wife!" In other words, a man who has grown tired of his wife prefers to dismiss her before he brings a second wife into his hut without her knowledge. If he nevertheless does so, "his first wife must patiently yield. Perhaps she does not like this living together and she herself finally leaves. But she continues to be tractable and submissive toward the man; she does not call him to account if he foists a rival upon her without her knowledge and against her will." This explanation by Alfredo was later confirmed by other persons.

/685 cont./

837 177 to me about her in very unfavorable terms (in this connection see the account on p. 353 /untranslated/).

593 837 627 Formerly, as we have said, adulterous acts had to be anxiously concealed from the eyes of the injured partner. If a man caught his wife, he thrashed her soundly and watched her more closely after that. If, moreover, he learned the identity of the other guilty party, he beat him if he was a match for him, or he summoned his own relatives to help (86). In any case he left the

86. Martial:199 describes the punishment of an adulterer which he himself observed in Orange Bay.

vicinity with his undependable wife. Many a man only gradually recovered from his wife's misstep and only after he had repeatedly thrashed her (87). It never went so far as conscious killing;

87. According to Hyades (p):335 and (d):309, "Adultery of the wife is punished by beatings which the husband or her parents inflict on the guilty party and her accomplice" /translated from French/.

there is the possibility, however, that a woman may have succumbed as a result of heavy blows (88). It very seldom happened

593 837 586

88. Martial:199 and also Dabbene (b):189 express themselves in the same vein. It is not correct to speak of actual murder on the part of the husband. The assertion by Outes (g):58 is as false as it is emphatic.

that a man dismissed his faithless wife forever solely because of this offense, even though she may have stayed with her lover for a time and later returned to the hut of her lawful husband (89). If, however, it could be proved that she became

89. Martial:199 tells of an adulteress who

/685 cont./

593 837 586 found her way back to her husband after an absence of three months and was taken in again by him.

pregnant by her lover -- this occurred in the extremely rare case where she was still young and her lawful husband was old -- the husband sent the adulteress irrevocably back to her lover and definitely separated from her.

593 837 If a wife catches her husband philandering, she usually has no alternative, but to overcome the humiliation silently. A spirited woman will make a noisy scene, scold the sinner, and expose his shameful deed to others, which wounds him more than a beating (90). The relatives of the wife would not dare beat the

90. "The adultery of the husband is not punished, except by the jealous scenes of his wife" /translated from French/.

faithless one; they do no more than to advise her to leave him. Sometimes a very hurt wife has come to blows with her errant husband, if she and another wife in the same hut were both betrayed by their common husband (01).

91. Spegazzini (a):166 reports having seen an Indian "completely paralyzed as a result of a beating which his wives gave him because of this kind of misdeed" /translated from Spanish/.

837 558 We lack evidence to determine definitely the number of cases of marital infidelity, since every Yamana makes a serious effort /686/ to keep his lapses strictly secret. The fact is, however, according to Gusinde (*l*):168, that "among the Yamana this shortcoming was more frequent than among the other two Fuegian tribes." There is no doubt, however, that everyone who is known to have erred in this respect experiences perceptible injury to his honor (92).

92. According to Hyades' (q):378 way of

/688 cont./

593 relationship with one another (96). The far-reaching independence

96. Bridges (e):333 maintains, "in general the conjugal tie was lacking in happiness as well as stability." In saying this he obviously contradicts the facts which are verified by many other details.

of the woman corresponds to her importance in family and household management (97), and her importance in the tribal com-

97. For "a wife was by no means wholly in her husband's power and she had quite as much liberty as was good for her" /cited in English/ (Bridges [I]:21). The far-reaching independence of the woman rests on her important contribution to the support of the family (p. 454).

munity as a whole is very nearly equal to that of the man. Although the various social units (in this case the monogamous marriages) have a very natural basis, there is never an absence of transgressions against their foundations on the part of a few individual persons. Even nowadays on the frosty Cape Horn Archipelago one can meet young married persons who love each other sincerely and aged persons who are harmoniously united.

5. Divorce

● 586 When young people come together in marriage, they almost never have the definite intention of forming a lifelong union. Calderon told me: "The young people think only of their love. Whether they are suited to each other will be seen only when they live together. If one of them is not suited to the other, they separate and each of them looks for another partner!" This is no proof against the basic lifelong continuance of marriage, but the fact of divorce is not only recognized, but, under certain

/688 cont./

586 circumstances, even regarded as justified. A few travelers have described divorce as such an indifferent step that their numerous errors are obvious (98) and generally the result of utter ignorance

98. A more contemptuous tone than that of Martial:199 is scarcely possible: "The total absence of any guarantee in these [conjugal] unions, moreover, frequently results in their rupture, through the fault of the man more often than that of the woman. They take each other and leave each other, following the whim or interest of the moment" /translated from French/.

of the solemnity of marriage. True family life, such as is reported by many reliable observers, would not come about even in Tierra del Fuego if every person could replace his life's companion with another at will, according to the principle of a supposed "continual promiscuity" /translated from French/ (Martial:200). True, each additional child draws the marital tie tighter between the two partners, but no less strong is the love between young married couples, which continues almost undiminished up to the appearance of /689/ the first child (99).

99. In this respect Bridges' (e):333 assertion that "the conjugal bond was weak until it was strengthened by children" /cited in English/ does not mean much.

586 626 It is lawfully permissible, however, for married people to separate if they have a reason for it. The people generally have a sensitive feeling about this and are not deluded by extenuation or false appearance, and although they cannot usually avoid injustice, their sharp weapon, namely, the discussion of conditions which cannot be condoned, remains effective for years.

586 The chief reason for dissolving a marriage is maltreatment by a brutal husband, yanúna, under which the wife must suffer. Very early Bridges (a):184 reported: "Cruel treatment often

/689 cont./

586 drives away a young wife from her husband, even though she has children, which sometimes are taken by the father if he loves them, and otherwise by the mother" /cited in English/. Not even the children of the couple prevent a divorce if the woman is repeatedly in danger of being mistreated. She herself does not complain to her own husband, but suffers silently. One of her male [604] relatives, however, above all her uncle, goes to him and reminds him of his duty. If repeated admonitions are fruitless, he threatens to remove the wife. She finally runs away with the help and under the protection of her relatives.

586 She often urgently needs this protection because the disap-
578 pointed husband will not willingly give her up, but pursues her or
627 constantly threatens her. On December 20, 1875, Bridges wrote: "Hidugalahgoon came here with a wife, that had been the wife of a man who had been very violent to her. Her mother was her fellow wife. She has two children by her former husband. The young fellow seemed very fond of her, and she of him; he had many friends here whom he was diligent to move in his favour by descanting upon the cruelties of the man, he feared, to his wife... The Easterns soon came up, and clustered around Philip's dwelling, where Hidugalahgooh and his wife lived. They began speaking quietly, and becoming more excited, gradually became vociferous and beat the woman, and compelled her to return to her former husband. But she would not stay, and then took shelter with Stephen. Thence again she was forced to come, but she was determined to kill her child; several evenings there was turmoil over this matter, and once considerable fighting. I took up the matter, and stated God's holy will on the subject. The woman was very obstinate and would not return. Her late husband then gave her up, but required some compensation, for he felt, in losing his young wife, he had lost much. Being consulted by Hidugalahgoon, I advised that he should, under the circumstances, give what he could to restore peace" /cited in English/ (MM:X, 80:1875) (100).

100. A few months previously, on July 30, 1875, he experienced another incident: "A young man, commonly called Tom Post, is son-in-law to a native of this place. Last autumn several disturbances took place here,

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586 578 627

caused principally by him. He ill-treated his wife, who was so offended that she refused to live with him, and took up her abode with her parents, who warmly took up her cause. He had also grieved his wife by other gross misconduct. There was accordingly a great disturbance, in which very many were concerned, and Tom Post had his head badly wounded. He came to me to get it bound up, when I took the opportunity to reason with him. In his great rage against his wife (who is also a bad character) and her relatives he was blind to his own faults; he promised amendment. He said he would remain single" /cited in English/ (MM: IX, 191:1875).

The position of the run-away wife can become unpleasant if the relatives of her lawful husband are numerous and bold, for they naturally take his part.

586 /690/ The woman, also, though less frequently, may be the cause of dissolution of the marriage. If she is so uncommonly lazy and careless that the whole family suffers badly, the man is forced to look for another partner. To his chagrin, the wife nevertheless does not leave, and he can do nothing but drag her along whether he likes it or not. An incapacity to work because of illness or old age never leads to divorce, for the man is at liberty to take a young, healthy woman besides his first wife. An unbearable disposition which the woman may develop in the course of the years can torture a man to such an extent that he has no other recourse but to flee into the arms of another person. No one stops him. A general rule 586 forbids a person to interfere in the marital affairs of relatives. It 602 is only when a woman is mistreated that an uncle or some other relative will definitely take her part (101); the situation is different if she runs away.

101. Bridges (a):202 emphatically expressed this principle: "A father-in-law or brother-in-law does not take his daughter's or sister's part against her husband, unless he severely injures

586 [602]

/690 cont./ her, when she is sometimes taken away from him and given to another" /cited in English/.

Young married couples sometimes separate after they have become better acquainted with each other and a definite antipathy has developed. This situation, of course, also may come about in the case of a couple who have shared the same hut for decades (102).

102. Bridges (a):184 mentions: "It frequently happens that there is inseparable aversion on the girl's part to her husband, and she leaves him, and if she persists in hating him she is then given to one she likes" /cited in English/.

586 837 Usually the real cause is an outside one, namely, a love affair with another person, which now presses toward a rupture of the existing marriage bond by any means available. Finally, in very exceptional cases, a man will get rid of a wife who has manifestly committed adultery (p. 468). In cases of adultery everyone is very lenient, for men, too, are by no means paragons of virtue in this respect.

586 It should be recognized that, although divorce among our Yamana is, to be sure, accomplished fairly easily, it is accompanied by significant secondary effects. It sounds ridiculous to maintain with Hyades (q):378: "Before the women become mothers, it is not rare to see them change husbands several times, either because of feminine inconstancy or because of bad treatment on the part of their spouses" /translated from French/ (103). Does anyone really believe

103. Apparently he simply repeats what Bridges (i):20 entered in his diary on April 22, 1871: "Not infrequently before they became settled in life, they have had many husbands, for the marriage relationship was not secure unless children were born to unite the parents in a common care for them" /cited in English/. I have already replied to this threadbare contention (pp. 408, 411).

that the appearance of the /691/ first child takes such a long time

/691 cont./

586 or that mistreatment of the woman begins immediately among young married couples? The circle of relatives of every married 586 person sees to it that a marriage continues, for they feel responsi- 602 ble for his assured sustenance which is practically impossible or unsuitable outside of marriage, except in the case of elderly people. The woman who has been divorced through her own fault is, to begin with, a burden to her relatives, less because of her maintenance than because of the damaged reputation of the entire circle of relatives and because of the worry about her children. This explains why the relatives almost always try to settle a threatened relationship or to mend a broken marriage, even when the wife has been mistreated. The children are divided up according to the wish and intention of the spouses; either they remain with the mother if the man runs away, and vice versa, or some relatives take pity on the youngsters until the parents have returned to an ordered life. [558] A person who through his own fault has dissolved a marriage never enjoys a good reputation.

586 These considerations have always tended to prevent lighthearted attempts at divorce. We do not have definite figures, but a man has more often run away from his wife than a woman from her husband; consideration for the children was a factor in this situation.

6. Celibacy

581 We have repeatedly pointed out that the economy of the Yamana basically prohibits a lifelong unmarried state, and that public opinion does not grant an individual full social standing unless he is married (104). Each of the two sexes has duties which can be

> 104. The Yamana find it incomprehensible, solely on the basis of the conduct of life, how Europeans can live unmarried for a lifetime and maintain themselves. They are regarded "as enigmas," as Hyades (q):377 expresses it.

fulfilled only through marriage. At marriageable age the young people are told in plain words that they may no longer put off a

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH6 Yahgan SH6

591 after which they would usually go for good to the groom's kin. Thus, localized groups of kin tended to be paternal.

604 After marriage the husband's paternal uncle and the wife's maternal aunt took particular interest in them, superseding in large measure their respective parents. Children-in-law were expected to
606 look after their parents-in-law in sickness or other needs. Children-in-law observed a number of avoidances regarding their parents-in-law: greeting their parents-in-law, speaking to them or breaking in on their conversation with remarks, looking at them, and sitting down beside them were all taboo. When in the same hut with their parents-in-law, they turned their sides or backs on them. A year or so after marriage, the restrictions between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law were partly, but never wholly, relaxed; those between son-in-law and father-in-law lasted through life. On visits of the father-in-law to his daughter, he and his son-in-law communicated wishes and news through the daughter and wife or by indirect discourse.

562 The man was, in theory, considered the head of the family, with
593 authority to rule. Actually, his authority was very far from absolute, and the woman was largely her own mistress, particularly in such provinces of her own as child rearing, food gathering, and canoe managing. Some men domineered over their wives, but not a few husbands were under the thumbs of their spouses. Some husbands were cruel, but if so they ran afoul of the wife's kin. More generally, woman's position both in the family and in the community seemed a respected one, not that of a drudge, slave, or inferior being, and she enjoyed a fairly high degree of freedom and independence.

684 Adultery was disapproved by the *Yahgan* code, but apparently
837 the code suffered appreciable infringement in practice. Adultery on the wife's part was, if discovered, punished by the husband with sound beatings, very rarely with death. Public opinion disapproved of her behavior. Adultery on the husband's part also gave rise to domestic battles in which the husband sometimes suffered severe treatment at his offended wife's hands. Jealousy on the part of both husband and wife was common. Wife lending was absent. There
[548] was no professional prostitution; a woman, married or unmarried, of markedly loose character was looked down upon.

586 Separation and divorce were fairly frequent, but were not lightly resorted to. The most common cause appears to have been cruel treatment of the wife by the husband, though there were other causes such as marked laziness, negligence, or crabbedness on the part of the
[595] wife. In case the wife became incapacitated through illness or age, the man could, and, it seems, more commonly did, take to himself a second wife.

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SHŚ Yahgan SHŚ

586 second wife. Desertion was more frequent on the man's part than on the woman's.

588 The aged were, according to all dependable evidence, usually respected, well treated, and well cared for. Neither abandonment or killing of the aged was ordinarily practiced but may have occurred in exceptional cases.

621 Political life.—Over and above the biological family there was no closely organized larger group or constituted authority. There were no silo, secret or other societies, or social classes, and no chiefs or ruling group or caste of any kind. Each biological family was for most practical purposes a sovereign political unit. The sense of individual independence was deep. No man took or brooked orders

585 or dictation from any other. However, aggressive individuals of personal force and strength, especially if they had powerful kin backing, at times dominated. Older men of recognized intelligence and integrity exercised considerable moral influence.

612 The next group to the biological family was the kinship group, mostly a paternal one. The members gave mutual aid where called for, particularly in feuds and in blood-revenge activities. The kinship group, owing to common patrilocal residence, was partly, but not fully localized.

619 The five regional divisions of the Yahgan, each with its distinctive dialect, had very slight political significance. Members of one division were usually chary of trespassing, at least for long, upon the territory of any other division, unless there were a recognized good cause, such as grave shortage of food, partaking of a stranded whale, trading, gathering canoe bark or fire-making materials.

621 Each of the five dialectic regions was broken up into local groups, each of which appears to have been composed, mostly at least, of members related by blood or marriage (Koppers, 1924 b, p. 5). Each such local group had its own territory—that of Ushuaia, for instance, occupied 20 miles (32 km.) of coast line on Beagle Channel—and its own name derived from its locality. Like the dialectic groups,

[622] these local groups had no chiefs. The local group's chief function was that of holding the *čiźraus* initiation rite. The leader chosen

[581] therefor had authority only so long as the rite lasted. As the *čiźraus* rite was an educational device contributing greatly to social conformity and solidarity, the local group's political function was chiefly an indirect pedagogical one. Loyalty to fellow members of a local group existed, but was not as strong as that to one's own kinship group.

628 There was no organized process of judicial procedure. In case

[582] of murder, the victim's kin took blood revenge on the murderer or his kin, or settled with him or them by composition. At times such kinship feuds led to a sort of pitched battle, in which slings,

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

Among the Yahgan, marriage by capture seems to have been less common than among the Ona. A woman given in marriage by her father against her will soon abandoned the undesired husband. In fact the Yahgan showed a tendency to change husbands and wives not infrequently, which we may term progressive polygamy. According to Rev. Thomas Bridges (1884, p. 206) a man might have from one to four wives at a time, but the number was not fixed by custom.

Infidelity resulted in no fixed form of punishment, but both the offending man and woman were apt to be beaten. Shortly before our arrival a Yahgan man had disappeared. It was rumored that his wife, enraged at his amours, had beaten him with a paddle and accidentally killed him.

Children

In the old days, to judge by the number of deserted orphans set down in the mission records, the Yahgan did not greatly devote themselves to the care of the children. Abortion seems to have been a common practice, and infanticide we judge was not rare. To reach the facts is somewhat difficult because early explorers did not have sufficient knowledge to describe such practices, and the mission contact soon put an end to them or drove them under cover.

Soon after birth had taken place the Yahgan mother bathed in the sea and the new-born child was also immersed in order to toughen it. This was a rather terrible ordeal for an infant, for the sea temperatures of winter and summer range from 40° to 50° Fahrenheit, while the air at best could be described as no warmer than temperate. We have no figures to show what mortality this custom entailed, yet cannot but believe that soon after birth all but the most vigorous and robust infants were thus ruthlessly eliminated.

After delivery, not only the mother but the father as well was expected to rest for a week or more. In this custom we see incipient couvade.

Games and Amusements

The Yahgan to pass the time indulged in various simple games and in singing and dancing. Of necessity the young boys devoted much care and time to practice with spear, bow and arrow, sling, and stones; but while these exercises often assumed the form of